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The Greyhound: A Speeding Silhouett...

Posted by admin in [Breeds](#) on 09 27th, 2010 | [No Comments](#)

There aren't many dog breeds that can claim the pedigree of the Greyhound; often mummified with Egyptian owners and portraits of the beloved pet painted on ancient tomb walls, this breed is from ancient times, and highly honored. For 400 years in England, from 1000 to 1400 BC, a law decreed that no 'meane person', meaning servant, slave, or peasant, was allowed to own a Greyhound; they were reserved for royalty only. One of these dogs was worth more than a peasant's life, and to kill a canine of this breed was to be hanged for murder. They were highly prized for their skills as course hunters, and were employed among the British, Scottish, and Irish for their independent thinking and hunting.

Things have changed somewhat over the years, and Greyhounds evolved from sighthounds, that is, a dog that hunts by sight rather than smell, to track racer or house pet. Its striking, regal figure, and immense speed have caused a few false beliefs about Zippers to crop up, and he's just getting over these misunderstandings to be seen in the light of what he truly is: a wonderful, low maintenance companion.

The Look

The silhouette of the greyhound is distinctive, graceful, and powerful. They stand between 27 and 30 inches tall depending on the sex, and weigh in at a mere 60 to 88 pounds, very light for the height. Greyhounds are very colorful, and there are over 30 recognized color schemes for them, none being more desired than the other, except perhaps on a personal preference. The large, deep chest hides a heart and lungs with a huge capacity, perfect for sprinting. Zippers is quite a fast doggie when he puts his mind to it, reaching speeds up to 40 miles an hour, but he's not bred for stamina and can't maintain the run for long. Zippers has very short fur, does not shed excessively, is a very hygienic dog, and appears very sleek.

The Health Issues

Surprisingly, Zippers is one of the better breeds concerning genetics. Due to his large chest, he may be prone to Bloat, which is when the stomach flips over. This is a very serious problem, must be treated quickly, and can prove fatal. While it's unknown what causes the condition exactly, it seems to be related to either drinking extreme amounts of water after a small portion of dry kibble, or exercising a lot within a few hours after eating. For this reason, it's best to give them several small meals during the day, rather than one big one.

They are sensitive to drugs, such as flea collars and a number of anesthetics. Make sure your vet knows about greyhounds before allowing Zippers to be put under for surgery. Greyhounds also have thin skin, which can tear easily. If you've ever seen a group of these dogs together, chances are you've seen them with muzzles on. This isn't because they're biters, but because excited little nips can leave to skin tears. The breed also has thin, light bones, which may be prone to easier fractures later in life. They are also prone to hypothyroidism. Fortunately, hip dysplasia is largely absent in this dog breed.

Attitude and Temperament

Greyhounds are amazing pets, very low-key, calm, and loving. They are not nervous, as many seem to think. They are actually one of the lowest maintenance dogs concerning physical activity. Because they were bred for short bursts of intense speed, they spend upwards of 18 hours a day sleeping, to conserve energy. They love doing this next to their favorite humans. For exercise, while they are content to laze all day, they should be allowed to run around about 3 or 4 times a week. Yes, a week. Remember, Zippers isn't built for stamina, and will tire more easily than other dogs.

Zippers is a gentle dog, almost all aggression having been bred out of him, making him excellent with other dogs and people, provided he's been socialized at an early age. Unsocialized dogs may be the fountain from which the nervous rumor comes, as a greyhound will be painfully shy and fretful around strangers if he has not been socialized.

However, greyhounds are very sight oriented and instinct mixed with training forces them to chase

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Smaller creatures, like rabbits, squirrels, and yes, the family cat, unless obedience schooling steps in. Funnily enough, even if the dog has been trained not to chase the family cat indoors, he still may do so outdoors or the neighbor's cat. It is important, therefore, to keep Zippers on a leash or behind a tall fence at all times. Their sensitivity and great intelligence makes them easy to train, though patience is still needed.

Due to the fact this dog does not need much exercise and that he sleeps most of the day, he actually makes an excellent apartment pet. Zippers is good with children and will tolerate a good amount of prodding and pulling, but like all dogs he has his limits, so leaving him unsupervised with small children not the best choice.

There are two strains of greyhound: the racers, which are often up for adoption when their racing days are over, and the show lines. Show lines are shorter, a bit heavier, and more angular. Both are not overly vigilant and not the best watch dogs. They don't enjoy rough play as much as other breeds, and because they sleep so much, they are actually 'lazier' than most dogs.

Obedience training is key with either racing or show greyhounds, as a dog who knows his place and boundaries is a well-adjusted dog. Racing dogs will often have received some training prior, as they live certain lifestyles before adoption. No matter which line you choose, a greyhound will give you 10-13 excellent years, happy and devoted, with minimum fuss.

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The Cornish Rex – One Cool Lookin...

Posted by admin in [Cats](#) on 08 23rd, 2010 | [No Comments](#)

Odd looking? Check! Resembling something out of Close Encounters of the Third Kind? Yes, indeed! Turns heads and the subject of much debate about whether it's a hypoallergenic cat? You betcha!

Since the mid 1950s, the result of a genetic mutation, the Cornish Rex has been wriggling his way into the hearts of cat lovers ever since. The story of breeding is rarely a romantic one and this one ranks up there with one such tale.

A mother cat of unspecified breed, who lived on a farm in Cornwall, England gave birth to a litter of several kittens. One came out looking rather different from his siblings. While the others had the usual short to medium hair one tends to associate with a newborn cat, say a Domestic Short Hair, this one had short, very curly, somewhat wiry hair. Thinking this was quite unusual, the farmer decided to breed him with his mother. Sure enough, two others popped out who resembled the father – ah brother – possessing the same short and curly hair. The farmer then took one of the females with him to the United States, where waiting with lust in his heart, was a Siamese. Combining the large ears and long and narrow tail, with the short wiry hair, the first Cornish Rex was born.

Characteristics of the Cornish Rex

Extremely soft, fine hair, your Cornish Rex, who for simplicity sake, let's name him Jack, is best suited to live indoors. Preferring the top of your warm laptop, underneath a heat lamp or near the oven when it's on, Jack gets cold easily. While we tend to refer to Jack's fur as hair, it's in fact not. If you can imagine what would happen if your other cat, let's call him Murphy the silver tabby, were to lose all his outer fur, which are comprised of both short and long hairs, and his middle layer, what he'd be left with the undercoat. It is this undercoat that Jack uses as his insulation, protection from dirt and dust, the elements, and the effects of bug bites, be the mosquitoes or fleas. Alternatively, Murphy has three layers to protect him from everything foreign that Jack is susceptible to. So, when you see Jack hovering under near the stove or under your blanket and it's 85°, you'll know why. Given the bubbly nature of Jack, he'll gladly take your lap if you aren't baking anything in the oven or are on the computer, preferring he not sit directly on the keyboard.

Now that you know everything you ever wanted to about Jack's fur, surely you'll want learn about his disposition and personality. Jack is playful and finds most everything amusing. Drop an ice cube on the floor, before you can bend over to pick it up, it's become his hockey puck. You'll smile, watch him shoot it across the floor and go back to what you were doing. Long after you've forgotten about it, you'll leave the kitchen and as you're walking to the bedroom, in the socks you put on only twenty minutes earlier, you'll traipse through a puddle and wonder if there is a leak in the house. Jack will be sitting on the other end of the room with that wry grin, almost as if to say, "Gotcha again!"

When Jack isn't playing ice hockey, since he has Murphy for his playmate, he'll enjoy roughhousing with him. Don't be alarmed as this is what cats love doing, especially those who are raised together often do.

Jack has a very sweet and loving disposition. When he's not playing with you, his siblings, he's more than happy to play alone. With just enough of the Siamese streak in him, he's a mischievous one. Unlike the Siamese who are known to be a bit on the crazy end of the spectrum, Jack is nothing like this. He won't sit on the top of the doorframe and wait for you to enter the room and pounce on you, nails fully extended. Siamese have been known to do that and then snicker as you are writhing in pain.

When Jack isn't playing, he's sleeping either under the covers, under a lamp or on your lap. He'd love

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to, if Murphy allows him, to sleep curled up in his brother's arms. Cornish Rexes are extremely affectionate and haven't a hint of a mean streak.

Assuming that you keep Jack indoors, away from extreme temperatures, out of the sun (especially a concern for white Cornish Rexes who are prone to skin cancer), he'll give you at least 10 and maybe more solid years of loving and lots of purring. Prone stealing the covers while you sleep, you may find yourself a little perturbed, but lighten up. He's just cold and well, he's also after all a cat. And we know that cats think they are royalty, so his comfort will always be paramount over yours.

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The Papillion Dog...

Posted by admin in [Breeds](#) on 07 31st, 2010 | [No Comments](#)

Quite honestly, looking at the those ears, her tail and feeling the love as she barrels toward you for puppy kisses, how could you not fall in love with the Papillion? Small as they are (they average between three and ten pounds), they are energetic, very sweet and adorable, it's no wonder they were the adornment of choice for the upper class of the Renaissance. But did you know that the Papillion is one of the most intelligent breeds? And, even more surprising, based on her perky disposition, Sandy makes a good watchdog.

If you are considering getting a Papillion, but you don't know much about their disposition, their personality and any potential health risks you may need to know, read on.

Just the Facts Ma'am

A Papillion's lifespan is generally 13-16 years. Assuming you feed Sandy a well-balanced diet, which means not too high in fat, fillers (such as meat-by-products), exercise her frequently and be mindful of her health, she'll err on the long side of her lifespan. Her temperament can best described as friendly and perky. Sandy won't be as hyper as a Jack Russell, but she also won't be as low-key as a Greyhound. She may not be quite as friendly as your sister's Golden Retriever but she'll certainly be friendly enough.

Although the Papillion isn't what you might call a brute and physically intimidating, such as her friend the Rottweiler, she is however alert and will let you know there is a stranger lurking about your property. Her bark may not be as intimidating as you'd like, but you'll know in the dead of night that something isn't right and then it will be up to you to investigate the noise.

Sandy will be as good with other dogs who already live in your home, as well any kids you have; although small children aren't her strong suit. She likes attention and isn't prone to snapping at people, unless of course you neglect to train her or attempt to humanize her.

When it comes to exercise, the Papillion is probably in the mid-range. Sandy won't require two long walks a day, she does need exercise. All dogs, regardless of breed, require exercise. Some, including the Papillion tire easily, and so it's best to go at her pace.

Known Health Issues

Papillions tend to develop a few health problems that you may want to be aware of. One is a bit of pain in the butt and will require you to be diligent about to avoid and the other two are potentially serious. Sandy is prone to developing tartar. Unless you want to try and brush her teeth daily - most dogs don't take to the toothbrush well and like to swallow both it and the toothpaste - you could invest in deer antlers. They're not expensive and didn't require that a deer be harmed in any way to get one. Antlers, like the outer layer of our skin, shed naturally. Scour around an area where you know that Deer roam and you can pick up some for free. They're full of marrow, which cleans all that unwanted tartar off their teeth. If you live in an area where they don't live, a quick Internet search will have yours on order in no time.

The Papillion is prone to dislocating her kneecaps from time to time. Their kneecaps are loose by nature and they can be easily lodged out of place. If Sandy has shown evidence of this, you may wish to talk with your Vet about what can be done to avoid this.

Another problem Sandy has a good chance of developing is Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA). The retina, which is in the back of the eye, is the place in our brain that receives light. In patients with PRA, what happens is that the retina starts thinning over time, causing first night blindness and eventually blindness. Unfortunately, this issue tends to exacerbate the dislocated kneecap problem. Owners of the Papillion have reported that as their beloved fur ball loses sight, he or she is even more apt to run into objects, which can increase the odds of dislocation.

If Sandy begins presenting with either or both of these issues, please take her to a Vet as soon as possible. A little intervention may not cure PRA (which is incurable) but may help you know the best course of treatment to take. If perhaps all it means is to remove objects that can easily fall on Sandy, that might be a start.

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How to De-skunk Your Dog or Cat –...

Posted by admin in [Pets](#) on 06 29th, 2010 | [No Comments](#)

If you have dogs and live in a place populated by free-roaming skunks – such as in a rural area, there's an exceedingly good chance that eventually, your pet's curiosity will get the better of him or her. Before the worst happens, you need to be sure you have a good de-skunking tool on hand. Skunks are nocturnal, so if you let your animal out after dark, chances are that's when he or she will encounter one.

Just picture it: the clock has just struck 3 and your dog – let's call her Phoenix – is champing at the bit to get outside and do her thing. Half asleep and dragging around with cobwebs for brains, you put her outside and wait, blinking in the darkness. There's a cry and, concerned, you run toward her, only to have your olfactory system inundated by one of the most pungent, horrid animal smells known to anyone who hasn't spent their life in a cave. Must be a skunk.

Most people would freak out and run around the house, rummaging through their pantry, medicine cabinet and who knows where else, wracking their still-fuzzy brain for some helpful tidbit. You must have the presence of mind to not be 'most people'. Animals can sense fear, and in this unpleasant situation, your poor dog would freak out as badly as you. This would in turn only make the whole affair into a bigger mess than it needs to be. She would probably run into the house for safety, which is the last thing you want her to do. Keep calm; this will help sooth her, so that what comes next won't be as traumatic, and you can get her clean all the sooner.

The chemical composition of a skunk's spray is alkaline in nature. This means it has a high pH. Therefore, simply applying soap and water won't work. The same goes for perfumes and other heavily scented cover-ups. To be truly effective, you need something with as low a pH as the skunk's spray is high. Water, which has a pH of 7, is considered neutral. You 'could' pick up some overpriced stuff from a store – with ingredients you don't recognize and probably can't pronounce. Or, you can save money and use things from around the home. They're cheaper, and just as effective.

First thing's first, though. Do not let your pet back inside. Skunk spray is pervasive and it will get in/on everything, which means your carpet, furniture, clothes, you name it.

Barring the aforementioned expensive store bought stuff, home remedies are easily had. If you have fresh tomatoes on hand, tomato paste/sauce or any one in conjunction with another will work. Tomatoes are acidic, and this counters the spray. Some also advocate the use of vinegar. Don't think of it as trading one stink for another. If not, try this recipe:

- 1 quart of 3% hydrogen peroxide
- ¼ baking soda
- 1 teaspoon of shampoo or other mild detergent (like those for washing wool. These do not have the synthetic perfumes of most cleaners).

Whatever you have, and decide to use, cover your pet to a fare-thee-well (being certain to avoid getting it in her eyes!) and rub liberally and vigorously. You have to leave it on for a bit. Some say to leave on for five minutes, some say more. A little research in this area goes a long way. Rinse/repeat as necessary.

With this simple solution (no pun intended) in hand, when (not if – because it will happen eventually) your outdoors-loving pet gets sprayed, you can help the poor girl out, and soon enough, she'll be as good as new.

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Miniature Horses: The Future of Pet...

Posted by admin in [Pets](#) on 05 24th, 2010 | [No Comments](#)

Everyone loves horses. Horses are smart, strong, majestic animals that show affection but can also take care of themselves in ways that other pets can't. Even cats need [cat insurance](#) for cat owners. Children the world over dream of owning a horse or a pony at some point in their lives, and that dream doesn't leave them as they become adults.

Yet for most people, owning a horse is not very practical. Horses are extremely large animals that require a lot of feeding, a lot of exercise, and space for all of the droppings that horses tend to leave behind.

Enter Miniature Horses

Around the world, various organizations have begun to breed miniature horses. Miniature horses stand about as tall as a medium to large size dog, and are equally as intelligent. They are strong and powerful for their size (like horses), but are small enough to take indoors.

Benefits of a Miniature Horse

Miniature horses are extremely unique animals that may someday have a lot of benefits for future pet owners. Some of the benefits of miniature horses include:

- Long Lifespan – Miniature horses live an average of 20 to 30 years or more, and a few have lived as long as 50. This lifespan is greater than almost every common type of pet besides birds.
- Strong Animals – Miniature horses are powerful animals that can handle some of the physical stresses that they may undertake. They can be trained to do light labor without any health repercussions.
- Calm (in general) – Miniature horses are not as excitable as other pets, and won't suffer from the same regular tantrums. They are prone to being frightened by predators. They also tend to jump at loud noises. But with a lot of time with your pet you can train them out of those behaviors.

Miniature horses are intelligent and easily trainable. As far as intelligence, lifespan and temperament, miniature horses make fantastic pets.

The Future Most Popular Pet?

Still, if you are looking for a new pet, miniature horses are not yet a viable option for most families. They are most often used as "Guide Horses" (like guide dogs) for the blind. They require a great deal of care and must sleep outdoors. They also make a big mess, need more exercise than dogs, and need to be trained out of scaring easily by a trained professional. This training takes a lot of time and effort.

They are also difficult to legally own, since they are still classified as livestock by most countries. With the exception of those that live on or around ranches, or have enormous yards, it is difficult to own and care for a miniature horse as a pet. It is not impossible, but it is an uphill battle that most families cannot win.

How the Future Will Change Pet Ownership

Despite these difficulties, do not be surprised if miniature pets become more popular with pet owners in the future. It wasn't until 1999 that organizations began to look out for miniature horses and began to use them as guide pets. With such a short history, it is no wonder they are not commonly seen in big cities.

If you are looking for **puppies for sale**, it would be easy enough to find one. Yet society is always changing, and it would not be a surprise to see miniature horses become a popular pet with homeowners in big cities in the next several years. They will take a lot of work, and are going to need a great deal of care over the course of their life, but with long lifespans and an intelligence that rivals that of dogs, miniature horses may quickly become one of the most popular pets in the near future.

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Why it is Important to Give Your Do...

Posted by admin in **Dog Beds** on 04 20th, 2010 | **No Comments**

Dogs are some of the most unique creatures in the world. Almost everything they do is a behavioral reaction to their environment. Dogs don't "think" in the traditional sense. They simply allow what occurs to occur and let their instincts and what they have learned cause them to act accordingly.

Your dog is born with a variety of instincts. Many of these instincts relate directly to pecking orders – hierarchies within a group of animals that affects how the pack makes decisions. If you own a dog you have most likely heard the term "alpha dog." Alpha is the term given to the dog that is the leader of the pack. Every other pack member has its own place after the alpha dog. That means that no two dogs are considered equal. Each dog has its place in the canine leadership hierarchy.

How Does Status Get Earned?

How dogs figure out their place in the pack is also instinctual. Dogs have a number of behaviors that help them figure out who is first, second, third, and so on. The most common behavior is aggression. Dogs often play fight and show aggression to figure who is the strongest, and the strongest is the one that gets to be first in line. The remaining dogs fight it out until their place has been decided. However, there are far more subtle ways that dogs figure out who is in charge as well. Dogs look for clues in their environment to help them understand their place. One example of how dogs figure out who is alpha is by sleeping arrangements.

How do Sleeping Arrangements Affect Pecking Order?

The alpha dog is the dog that is always in charge. When the alpha dog walks, other dogs are supposed to get out of its way. The same thing holds true with where the alpha dog sleeps. Wherever the alpha dog wants to sleep, that becomes its sleeping area, and no other dogs are allowed to sleep in that area.

If you invite your dog onto your bed to sleep with you, you are telling the dog that you are not necessarily alpha, because if you were alpha dog your bed would be off limits. In addition, it is very unlikely that you are going to sleep in your dog's crate, so suddenly it appears to your pet as though its bed is off limits and your bed is fair game. If your dog is unsure if you are alpha, it will perform other unwanted behaviors as it tries to figure out its place within the pack.

You want to keep your dog out of your bed at all times. No matter how much your pet whines or how cute it looks, your bed is your bed, and your dog is off limits. Instead, you should get your pet its own bed to sleep on. This will provide it with a comfortable sleeping location that is all its own (which is useful for your dog's comfort within your home) but ensures that your dog understands that you are still alpha dog in the pack.

What if You Want to Sleep With Your Pet?

If you really want to sleep with your pet, do so in areas that are already open to your pet. If your pet is already allowed to sleep on your couch, for example, then you should sleep with your dog on the couch. Just make sure that your primary sleeping area is always off limits to your dog to reduce any likelihood of bad behaviors by your pet.

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